CAPSULE SUMMARY
CT-600
Cypress Swamp Tenant House
2880 Grays Road
Prince Frederick, Calvert County
c1942
Private

Built circa 1942 for Lawrence Gray, the historic dwelling at 2880 Grays Road is significant as an example of a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century rural residence built by African-American craftsman Clarence Bowen. A local entrepreneur, Bowen was a carpenter by profession who owned a sawmill in the vicinity of the cypress swamp and made his own concrete blocks. The dwelling appears to incorporate lumber milled at Bowen's sawmill as well as rock-face concrete blocks formed by Bowen's own block-maker. Bowen is known to have been responsible for the construction of other buildings in the area including the Clarence M. Bowen House (CT-268) and Carroll Western United Methodist Church (CT-550). As is the case with Bowen's other buildings, the house at 2880 Grays Road bears close similarities to rural residences and farmhouses built in Calvert County during the first few decades of the 20th century. The use of traditional residential forms, construction methods, and building materials at 2880 Grays Road are reflective of the conservative building practices of a self-taught carpenter and builder.

The historic house is a two-story, wood-frame dwelling located southwest of the intersection of Grays Road and Sixes Road. It has a rock-face, concrete-block pier foundation, is clad in German weatherboard, and has a cross-gable roof sheathed in v-crimp metal sheets. The house has an L-shaped footprint and a two-story ell. The façade is characterized by a one-story, three-bay porch on replacement turned posts. There are two interior, brick chimneys with corbeled caps. The house has projecting open gables with a two-part, wood box cornice and a weatherboard soffit and overhanging eaves with exposed cut rafters. There are currently no doors, windows, or surrounds present on the exterior of the house, and all openings on the first floor have been covered with plywood boards.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-600

1. Name of Pr	operty	(indicate prefer	red name)			
historic	Cypress Swamp	Tenant House				
other						
2. Location					-	
street and number	2880 Grays Road	l			n	ot for publication
city, town	Prince Frederick				\	ricinity
county	Calvert					
3. Owner of P	roperty	give names and m	ailing addresses o	of all owne	rs)	
name	Calvert County B	oard of County Co	ommissioners			
street and number	175 Main Street				telephone	410-535-1600
city, town	Pr. Frederick		state	MD	zip code	20678-3337
X Contributing R Determined Eli Determined Inc Recorded by H	esource in National F esource in Local Hist gible for the Nationa eligible for the Nation	Register District toric District I Register/Marylan aal Register/Maryla	d Register			
Other 6. Classificati	on					
district	wnership         Cu           X. public         —           private         —           both         —	rrent Function agriculture commerce/trade defense domestic education funerary	landscape recreation/o religion social transportation		Resource Cour Contributing  1  1  2	Noncontributing  buildings sites structures objects Total

#### 7. Description

Inventory No. CT-600

#### Condition

	excellent	_X_	deteriorated
-	good	-	ruins
-	fair		altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Built circa 1942, the historic house at 2880 Grays Road is a two-story, wood-frame dwelling located southwest of the intersection of Grays Road and Sixes Road in Calvert County, Maryland. It has a rock-face, concrete-block pier foundation, is clad in German weatherboard, and has a cross-gable roof sheathed in v-crimp metal sheets. The house has an L-shaped footprint and a two-story ell. The façade is characterized by a one-story, three-bay porch on modern replacement posts. There are two interior, brick chimneys with corbeled caps. One is centrally located in the front section of the house and the other is centrally located in the ell. The house has projecting open gables with a two-part, wood box cornice and a weatherboard soffit and overhanging eaves with exposed cut rafters. Other notable elements include narrow, unmolded wood cornerboards and wood louvered vents underneath each of three gables. There are currently no doors, windows, or surrounds present on the exterior of the house. All openings on the first floor have been covered with plywood boards.

SETTING. The 7.5-acre parcel is located at the headwaters of the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp on the west side of Grays Road, just south of the intersection with Sixes Road in a rural agricultural area of southern Calvert County, Maryland. The property, now part of the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Reserve, a county-run park, sits on high ground just above the cypress swamp. The dwelling is located towards the back (west) of the lot facing Grays Road. It is a heavily wooded lot with mature secondary-growth vegetation which has grown right up to the house on the west and north sides. The house is approached by a straight gravel drive which runs from Grays Road to a parking area on the south side of the house. On the north side of the drive is an open field overgrown with waist-high vegetation. The south side of the lot is heavily wooded with mature secondary-growth vegetation. A nature trail emerges from these woods in front of the house, crosses the drive, and continues across the open field and into the woods beyond.

PRIMARY RESOURCE EXTERIOR. The façade, or east elevation, has three irregularly-spaced bays on the first story that accommodate an off-center entry flanked by two windows openings. On the second story are two evenly-spaced window bays. Paint lines reveal that there were shutters flanking the second-story windows at one time. The front porch, which does not extend the entire width of the façade, features a replacement concrete-block pier foundation and balustrade, and a shed-roof sheathed in v-crimp metal sheets and exhibiting exposed cut rafters. Recently rebuilt, the porch has a new wood floor and an original beaded-board ceiling, and a new central stair to the ground. Ghost lines inside the porch reveal that it used to be enclosed or screened, a fact reinforced by documentary photographs. (1) On the north elevation of the house, the main section and ell are flush. There are two evenly-spaced window openings on each full story. The west elevation is characterized by the single-bay projecting ell with a window opening at the center of each full story. The west elevation of the main section also features a single central window opening on each full story. Ghost lines on the back of the house reveal that there was at one time a one-story porch between the main section and ell. The south elevation of the main section has a single window opening at the center of each full story. There are two metal prongs under the gable which appear to have held antennae or other electrical equipment. The south elevation of the ell has two asymmetrical door openings on the first story and one window opening on the second story.

PRIMARY RESOURCE INTERIOR. The dwelling consists of three rooms on each floor arranged in an L-shaped plan with a stair between the two front (east) rooms. A single exterior entry provides access from the front porch into the south room. Two exterior entries on the south elevation of the ell provide access into the back (west) room. All rooms were originally heated by stoves. The stove in the south room was vented by a chimney in the north wall. The north room and ell shared a chimney located in the wall between them. The interior of the house has been completely gutted, leaving only the wood balloon framing and floorboards. The studs are approximately a foot apart. Down braces are present at the corners of the house, buttressing the corner posts. Ghost marks on the wall indicate that the interior walls and ceilings were finished with plaster and lath. The floors are sheathed with narrow tongue-and-groove boards. The room on the first floor of the ell has vinyl tile on top of the floorboards suggesting that this room was used as a kitchen.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-600

Name

Cypress Swamp Tenant House

Continuation Sheet

Number

7 Page 1

#### **ENDNOTES**

(1) Photograph taken during a previous survey in 1980 reveals that at that time the porch was enclosed and had 8/8 windows, and that the second story windows were flanked by shutters. Photograph, 1980. Survey Files, CT-600. Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD.

8. Signifi	cance				Inventory No.	CT-6	00
Period	Areas o	f Significance	С	heck and justify	y below		
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 _X 1900-1999 2000-	ard art cor cor cor	riculture sheology shitecture mmerce mmunications mmunity planning nservation	_ _ _ _ x _	economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement	<ul> <li>health/medicine</li> <li>industry</li> <li>invention</li> <li>landscape architecture</li> <li>law</li> <li>literature</li> <li>maritime industry</li> <li>military</li> </ul>		performing arts philospohy politics/government religion science social history transportation other:
Specific dat	es	c1942, 1977			Architect/Builder C	lareno	ce M. Bowen
Constructio	n dates	c1942					
Evaluation for	or:						
N	ational Re	gister		Maryla	and Register	х	not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY. Built circa 1942 for Lawrence Gray, the historic dwelling at 2880 Grays Road is significant as an example of a mid-20th-century rural residence built by African-American craftsman Clarence Bowen. Lawrence R. Gray was a tobacco farmer and a major landholder in the area. Oral history indicates that Gray hired neighbor and local builder Clarence M. Bowen to construct the tenant house at 2880 Grays Road. A local entrepreneur, Bowen was a carpenter by profession who owned a sawmill in the vicinity of the cypress swamp and made his own concrete blocks. The dwelling appears to incorporate lumber milled at Bowen's sawmill as well as rock-face, concrete blocks formed by Bowen's own block-maker. (1) Bowen is known to have been responsible for the construction of other buildings in the area including the Clarence M. Bowen House (CT-268) and Carroll Western United Methodist Church (CT-550). As is the case with Bowen's other buildings, the house at 2880 Grays Road bears close similarities to rural residences and farmhouses built in Calvert County during the first few decades of the 20th century. The use of traditional residential forms, construction methods, and building materials at 2880 Grays Road are reflective of the conservative building practices of a self-taught carpenter and builder.

HISTORY. In 1942, Lawrence R. Gray (b. c1869) acquired 8 acres "near the headwaters of Battle Creek...bordering on the public road leading from Bowensville to Mutual [Grays Road]." The Gray family, for whom Grays Road is named, were tobacco farmers in the area. Lawrence R. Gray and his wife Ada L. Gray (b. c1880) lived across Grays Road from the parcel with their children including their son, Lyttleton, who assisted his father on the farm. Gray purchased the property from his neighbor, Agnes Gantt, widow of African-American farmer George V. Gantt. Oral history indicates that Gray hired local African-American carpenter Clarence Bowen to build the house at 2880 Grays Road as a tenant house for farm laborers working on his land. Clarence M. Bowen (b. c1885) lived a short distance west of Gray on Sixes Road in a two-story, wood-frame dwelling that he built himself (CT-268). Bowen, along with several other members of the church, had also contributed towards the construction of the new Carroll Western United Methodist Church (CT-550). An entrepreneur, Bowen decreased the costs of building by supplying his own lumber milled at his sawmill located near the cypress swamp and by casting his own concrete blocks. (2)

In 1952 the property passed from Lawrence and Ada Gray to their eldest son, Lyttleton L. Gray (b. c1900). The property remained in the Gray family until 1971 when it was sold to Paul G. Myers and his wife Marie R. Myers. Myers acquired a total of 115.72 acres from the Grays in that transaction and subsequently cultivated tobacco on the property until 1977. During this period the lands immediately adjacent to the house were open fields. The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners purchased the dwelling and 7.5 associated acres from Myers in 1977. The tract was incorporated into the adjacent Battle Creek Cypress Swamp that had been established in 1957 by the Nature Conservancy with the acquisition of 60 acres from the Keims. (3)

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No CT-600

Name	Cypress	Swamp	Tenant House
Continu	ation Sh	eet	
Number	8	Page	1

- (1) Uunila, Kirsti. Interview by Carrie E. Albee, February 5, 2003. Uunila indicates that comparison of the pattern of the rock-face concrete blocks used at 2880 Grays Road with those at Clarence Bowen's house (CT-258) suggest that they were made in the same block-maker.
- (2) Parker, Alecia A. Human Interaction with Battle Creek Cypress Swamp. A report prepared for the Battle Creek Nature Education Society. Property Files. Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center, Prince Frederick, MD. p. 16. And Benjamin White. Interview by Alecia A. Parker, July 15, 1995. Transcript reprinted in the above publication.
- (3) Deed Book JLB 11, Page 160. Land Records of Calvert County, Calvert County Courthouse, Prince Frederick, MD.

#### CHAIN OF TITLE

June 8, 1977

Land Records of Calvert County
Liber JLB 212, Folio 633
Paul G. Myers and Marie R. Myers to Calvert County Board of Commissioners
7.5 Acres

March 5, 1971

Land Records of Calvert County
Liber JLB 127, Folio 105
Lyttleton L. Gray and Helen A. Gray to Paul G. Myers and Marie R. Myers
115.72 Acres (3 Parcels)

January 3, 1952

Land Records of Calvert County Liber AWR 28, Folio 287 Lawrence R. Gray and Ada L. Gray to Lyttleton L. Gray 8 Acres (1 of 4 Parcels)

June 13, 1942

Land Records of Calvert County Liber AHA 47, Folio 520 Agnes V. Gantt to Lawrence R. Gray 8 Acres

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CT-600

See continuation sheet.

#### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 7.5 Acres

Acreage of historical setting

Unknown

Quadrangle name

Broomes Island

Quadrangle scale

1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

This historic house is located at 2880 Grays Road in Prince Frederick, Calvert County, Maryland. It has been associated with Tax Map 30, Parcel 245 since its construction circa 1940. The current deed is found in the land records of Calvert County in the Calvert County Courthouse in Prince Frederick: Deed Book JLB 212, Page 633.

#### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Carrie E. Albee		
organization	EHT Traceries, Inc.	date	2/26/03
street and number	1121 5th Street, NW	telephone	202-393-1199
city or town	Washington	state DC zi	p code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust

DHCD/DHCP

100 Community Place Crownsville MD 21032

410-514-7600

## Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-600

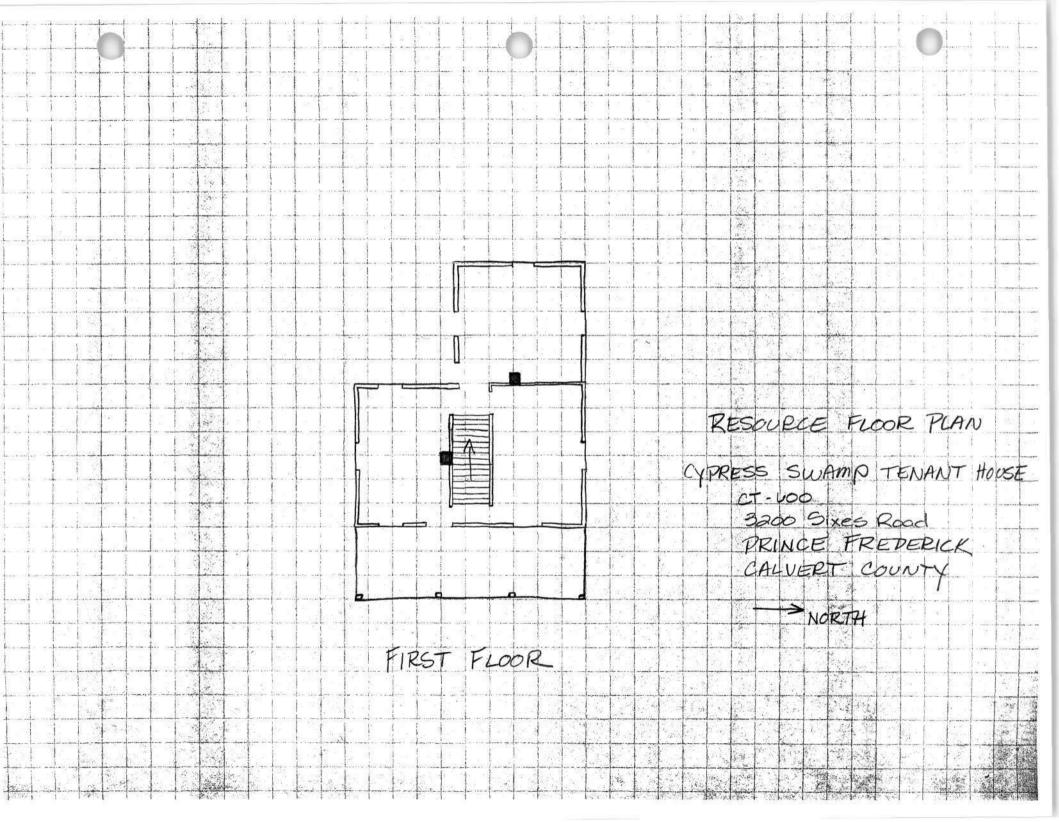
Name	Cypress	Swamp 7	Tenant House	
Continua	ation She	et		
Number	9	Page	1	

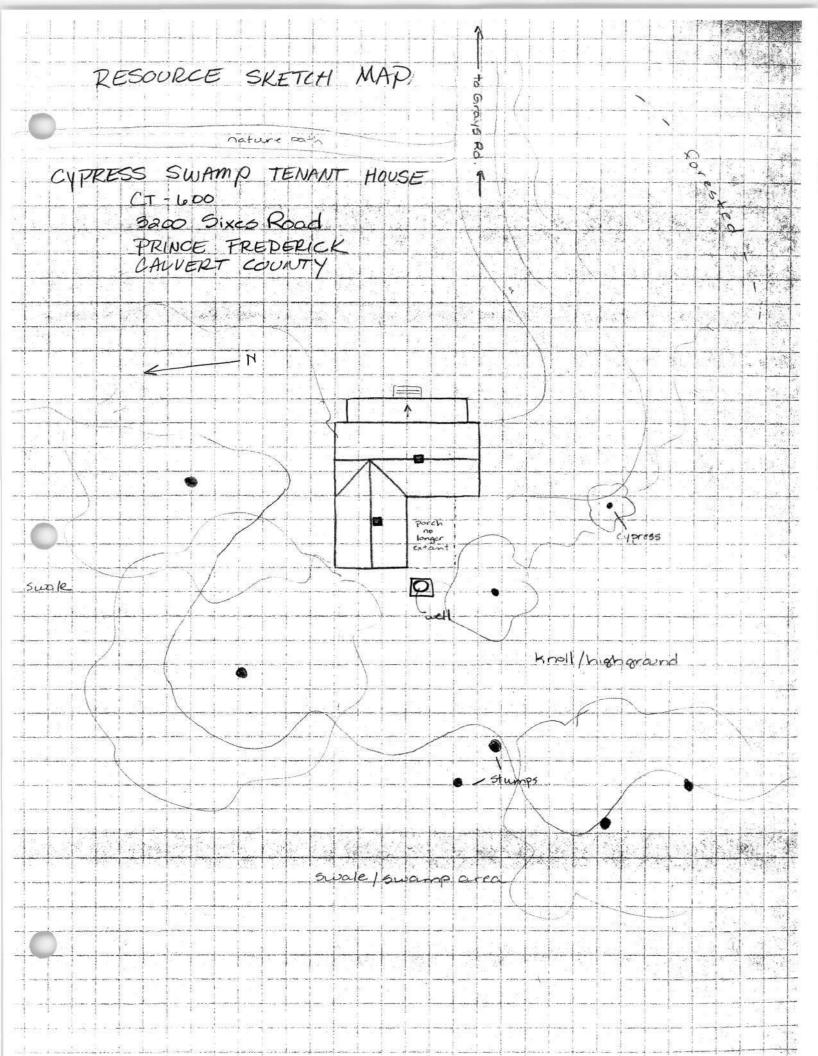
Land Records of Calvert County, Calvert County Courthouse, Prince Frederick, MD.

Parker, Alecia A. Human Interaction with Battle Creek Cypress Swamp. A report prepared for the Battle Creek Nature Education Society. Property Files. Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center, Prince Frederick, MD.

Photograph, 1980. Survey Files, CT-600. Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD.

Uunila, Kirsti. Interview by Carrie E. Albee, February 5, 2003.





## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY TO MD. 23 359000m.E. 35' 362 38° 4262000m.N CT-600 Cypress Swamp Tenant House 2880 Grays Road Prince Frederick, Calvert County **Broomes Island USGS Quad** 4259 BROOMES ISLAND, MD. NE/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE 4258 38076-D5-TF-024 Kitt 1963 27'30" PHOTOREVISED 1986 DMA 5660 I NE-SERIES V833 SCALE 1:24 000 1 MILE 0 1000 3000 7000 FEET 1000 2000 6000 0 1 KILOMETER 4257 CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MDSHPO HOUSE, EAST ELEVATION OF &



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MD SHPO HOUSE, SE CORNER

2 OF 8



CT-600 CY PRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MD SHPO HOUSE, SOUTH ELEVATION

3 OF 8



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MD SHPO HOUSE, NORTH ELEVATION 4 OF 8



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MP TRACERIES 12/2002 MDSHPO FIRST FLOOR LOOKING NORTHWEST 5 OF 8



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MD SHPO FIRST FLOOR LOOKING EAST 6 OF 8



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MD SHPO FIRST FLOOR LOOKING WEST

7 OF 8



CT-600 CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE 3200 SIXES ROAD CALVERT COUNTY, MD TRACERIES 12/2002 MD SHPO SECOND FLOOR LOOKING NORTH 8 OF 8

CT-600
CYPRESS SWAMP TENANT HOUSE
(c. 1900)
Prince Frederick
Private

An enclosed porch covers the front of this three-bay frame farmhouse. The two-story building includes a rear kitchen ell.

#### MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CT-600 MAGI

0506005735

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

HISTORIC				
	ess Swamp Tenant House			
AND/OR COMMON	ess byamp rename mouse			
LOCATION	J			
STREET & NUMBER				
	s Road			
CITY, TOWN	s_NO8.0		CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	RICT
Princ	e Frederick X	VICINITY OF Bowens		
STATE	- Face		Calvert	
Maryl			Carveru	
CLASSIFIC	ATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENT USE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	_MUSEUM
XBUILDING(S)	XPRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	ВОТН	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	X_PRIVATE RESIDE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	
OBJECT	_IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATIO
-X 2550	FPROPERTY	XNO	MILITARY	OTHER:
NAME Calve	F PROPERTY ert County Board of Co			OTHER:
NAME Calve	ert County Board of Co	unty Commissioners	Telephone #:	OTHER:
NAME Calve		unty Commissioners	Telephone #:	_other:
Calve	ert County Board of Co	unty Commissioners	Telephone #:	zip code
NAME Calve STREET & NUMBER Calve CITY. TOWN Prince	ert County Board of Cor ert County Courthouse, ee Frederick —	unty Commissioners Main Street (MD 70	Telephone #: 65) STATE, 2 MD 206	zip code 678
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CONDITION

CHECK ONE

**CHECK ONE** 

822\_EXCELLENT

\_\_DETERIORATED

\_\_UNALTERED

\_ORIGINAL SITE

\_\_GOOD \_\_FAIR \_\_RUINS
\_\_UNEXPOSED

\_\_ALTERED

\_\_MOVED DATE\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

An enclosed porch covers the front of this three-bay frame farmhouse. The two-story building includes a rear kitchen ell.

Two over two sash windows light the house. An off-center brick stove flue heats the building.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
_1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIA
1700-1799	_ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
_1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
_1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
		_INVENTION		
SPECIFIC DAT	ES	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT	

This small farmhouse is of no known historical significance.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF	NECESSARY	
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA		
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY		
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION		
(2)		
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PRO	PERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY B	OUNDARIES
	- 27 WARD 17 2000	
STATE	COUNTY	
STATE	COUNTY	
	COOIVII	
	COONT	
FORM PREPARED RY	COUNTY	
FORM PREPARED BY	COUNTY	
NAME / TITLE	COUNTY	
	DATE	
Merry Stinson ORGANIZATION		
Merry Stinson ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey STREET & NUMBER		
Merry Stinson ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey STREET & NUMBER Route 5 Box 154	DATE TELEPHONE	
Merry Stinson ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey STREET & NUMBER	DATE	

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

Cypress Swamp Tenant House Broomes Island auadrangle CT-600 UNITED STATES HT OF THE INTERIOR CICAL SURVEY Williams 18 Wharf



Cypress Swamp Tenant House Grays Road, Prince Frederick Coloert County, MD E. elevation

merry stinson morel, 1980